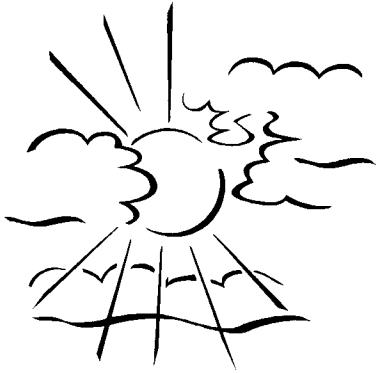


***Department
of
Human
Services***

Prepared by the
DHS Office of
Communications
(517) 373-7394



*Important story at this spot

Articles in Today's Clips

Wednesday, August 24, 2005

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

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The Grand Rapids Press

Letters for Wednesday, August 24, 2005

Committed to safety

The Department of Human Services is entirely committed to keeping the children in our care safe. Even one child at risk is too many.

Early in the Granholm administration, we identified long-standing problems in the foster care program and took immediate action to address them. Some examples:

We will shortly have an automated match between foster care providers and the State Police's criminal history database to enable monthly updates.

We have automated systems to capture case records and increase supervisory oversight.

Next month, we will unveil a public, Web-based report card of foster care agencies, giving our workers and the public a tool to monitor those caring for foster children.

Today, we check criminal history on 100 percent of those seeking an initial foster care license. The findings of the auditor general in the foster care audit are important issues that we have been and are continuing to work on.

The department's priority is to protect children and families. Under the Granholm administration, we have been strengthening the child welfare system through an emphasis on prevention, early intervention and community partnerships.

Even in these difficult times, we continue to strengthen our systems and practices. At the same time, we are enormously concerned with proposals in both the House and the Senate to drastically cut our staff. If we are to make improvements recommended by the auditor general and continue our national leadership in child welfare, we must have the resources to do so.

MARIANNE UDOW
DIRECTOR
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

Michigan Report

August 23, 2005

CAPITAL NOTEBOOK

HOUSE COMMITTEE TO REVIEW FOSTER

CARE AUDIT: A House committee will hold a hearing in September on an audit that was critical of the Department of Human Services for its oversight of children's foster care services. The scheduling of the September 7 hearing by the Family and Children Services Committee follows action by the Senate Families and Human Services Committee to also seek an explanation from state officials about the lapses identified by Auditor General Thomas McTavish.

"The auditor general's findings are heartbreaking because children who were already facing hardship were needlessly subjected to additional pain," Rep. John Stahl (R-North Branch), chair of the House committee, said.

The auditors found the department failed to conduct criminal background checks on adults in foster care homes and did not monitor contractors, though the department said many of the problems were traceable more to lack of documentation rather than failure to ensure children's safety.

Foster care center to get provisional license from state

Wednesday, August 24, 2005

By Nate Reens
The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- The interim director of St. John's Home said Tuesday the foster care center has reached an accord with state officials on licensing citations issued last year when a 10-year-old resident was killed while on a shopping trip.

The Northeast Side foster home did not admit violations of state licensing standards played a role in Jacquelyn Reah's Nov. 27 death, but acknowledged it could improve procedures for future outings, said Marc Thomson, who is filling the lead role for St. John's while Executive Director David VanRooy is on a medical leave.

The girl darted out of a center van and across Int. 96, where she was struck and killed by a motorist.

She became agitated in the vehicle and jerked the steering wheel, prompting a counselor to stop the vehicle to try to discipline her.

The state maintains the 2355 Knapp St. NE center violated staffing ratio and medication dispensing rules, but granted St. John's a 30-day provisional license mandating another inspection before Sept. 22.

If a licensing consultant finds St. John's in compliance with state rules, its full license will be reinstated. There will be no change in operations during the monthlong period, Thomson said.

The state wants outings to be more carefully planned and have all children scheduled to be on the trip receive individual approval from administrators.

Each vehicle also must be equipped with cell phones and emergency contacts.

The center drew fire for initially claiming it could not have foreseen trouble with Jacquelyn.

Tough transitions for program, teens-20

By DANIEL G KELSEY

dkelsey10@charter.net

Teenagers go through a disorienting rite of passage when they move from school and family to college, work and independent living.

But Christina, 17, faces a rite of passage with complications as she enters her senior year of high school. Over the next several months the Holland girl will age out of foster care.

By the grace of public policy she has Youth In Transition to help see her through to the other side.

Christina, who withheld her surname on advice of agents from the Allegan County offices of the Michigan Department of Human Services, outlined her case to Allegan County commissioners at a regular meeting in August. Leigh Anne, 18, who also withheld her surname, followed suit.

Christina has been in foster care as a ward of the courts for the past four-and-a-half years.

"It's been a long, long road," she said. "You always feel like you're alone."

With the help of Youth In Transition, which provides money for necessities such as household supplies and transportation, she supplements her income from working about 20 hours a week. She expects to get her own apartment soon.

"That's really rough, especially when you're young," she said.

Beyond the rite of passage Christina intends to go to the University of Washington to study international affairs and anthropology.

CONTINUED

Tough transitions for program, teens

Page 2 of 3

The transition program, which began with the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999, gets federal dollars to promote independent living. It serves a clientele between ages 14 and 19. Locally the money goes to wards of the Allegan County courts even if, like Christina and Leigh Anne, they live beyond county borders.

In June the program strengthened its foundations with creation of a class for groups of clients. The class covers employment skills, budgeting, nutrition, education, housing, parenting, mentoring relationships and broad living skills. Anywhere from three to 15 clients meet twice a month for three-and-a-half hours.

Kendra Spanjer, a juvenile justice specialist at Allegan County DHS, moderates the class.

"I'm thankful for the supervisors and directors at our office who are willing to support the class," Spanjer told commissioners.

Susan Bailey-Carman, director of Allegan County DHS, introduced Christina and Leigh Anne. Bailey-Carman asked listeners to recall how the supports of family and community helped them through their own rites of passage.

"A lot of these young people in foster care have none of these supports," she said.

Bailey-Carman spotlighted the teenagers as part of her annual report to commissioners. Backing her words with a battery of reports and charts, she pressed home messages of increasing failure of Medicaid to fill the cracks and worsening plight of the poor. Compensatory services especially to adults have suffered of late.

"We're trying to keep up with those payments. The caseload's going up and we don't have any staff," Bailey-Carman said. "The states' backs are breaking under the weight of Medicaid."

The caseload rises as unemployment rises, as it does at present in Allegan County.

A report in August from the Michigan League for Human Services assessed the impact of a flat rate of assistance grants. There have been no adjustments since 1993. Recipients, having lost about one-third the value of their grants to inflation, now receive assistance at 36 percent of poverty, according to the report. Bailey-Carman warned that a legislative proposal would cut grants by \$50.

Tough transitions for program, teens

Page 3 of 3

"I don't know where that would take us," she said. "Maybe back to the 1960s."

She concluded with comments on the elimination of federal dollars for the State Emergency Relief program that tides people over in case of layoffs, evictions or utility shutoffs.

"We ran out of money at the end of July. The state, not just Allegan County, had to stop the payments. We aren't going to be able to help people," Bailey-Carman said. "It's going to be a very tough August and September."

Commissioner David Babbitt (Ganges Township) pierced the welter of facts and figures in Bailey-Carman's charts to get at a hidden consequence of stagnant Medicaid funding.

"Basically, young people needing medical care and old people in nursing homes are in competition with each other for those dollars," Babbitt said.

Bailey-Carman brought no one to stand as poster child for elder care, but she brought Leigh Anne and Christina.

Leigh Anne, a Kalamazoo girl just graduated from high school, has been four years in foster care. She's about to go to Kalamazoo Valley Community College to begin studies leading to a career in elementary education. She's a year closer than Christina to the reality of aging out of foster care and aging into independent living.

Payments from the transition program, she said, contributed toward her senior pictures, prom dress, senior trip.

"They've helped me with a lot of stuff I didn't have my mom and dad for," she said.

Now the demands grow still more fundamental.

"We work and we work and we work and it's hard to get the money for an apartment," Leigh Anne said.

Which makes the rite of passage all the more disorienting.

Mom Accused Of Leaving Child On Side Of Road

Ypsilanti Woman Arrested In New York

POSTED: 12:35 pm EDT August 23, 2005

An Ypsilanti woman is accused of leaving her 6-year-old foster son on the side of a New York road.

An Erie County Sheriff's Department deputy was patrolling Grand Island Boulevard in Grand Island, N.Y., at about 6 p.m. Sunday when he discovered a small boy running alone down the side of a busy highway, according to the sheriff's department. The child was crying and visibly upset, and was being followed by two concerned citizens, the sheriff's department said.

The deputy was able to locate the child's mother, Judith A. Andrews, 55, who had been visiting the area. Andrews told the deputy that she had stopped her vehicle in a parking lot, and had proceeded forward. She said she thought her son was still in the rear of the vehicle.

Witnesses who had followed the boy said they had seen the mother arguing with the child outside of the vehicle. They said the mother returned to her car and left her child to run behind the car.

Andrews was arrested Sunday night. She was arraigned Monday on charges of child endangerment, according to the sheriff's department. She is being held on a \$15,000 bond at the Erie County Holding Center.

The boy has temporarily been placed under the care of child protective services in New York. Local 4 obtained information that Andrews had been in trouble with the law previously for alleged child neglect.

Case reports show that Andrews' brother called police to investigate alleged abuse and a local man contacted police after he said he spotted Andrews abusing her son in an Ypsilanti park.

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August 24, 2005

Jarvis sentenced to 8-15 years

Sexual contact with former foster daughter

By IAN C. STOREY

Record-Eagle staff writer

TRAVERSE CITY - A Manton man will spend at least eight years in prison after pleading guilty to having sexual contact with his former foster daughter.

Dennis Jarvis, 34, was sentenced to eight to 15 years in prison Friday morning by 13th Circuit Court Judge Thomas Power after pleading guilty earlier this month to one count of third-degree criminal sexual conduct.

Power also sentenced Jarvis to three to five years in prison - a concurrent sentence - for attempted kidnapping.

In exchange for his plea, Grand Traverse County prosecutors dismissed one count of kidnapping and five other counts of third-degree CSC against Jarvis.

Jarvis was arrested in March after Benzie County officials received a call about a possible abduction attempt of a 13-year-old girl.

Police said Jarvis was spotted picking up the teen in his vehicle by a police surveillance team at the scene before allegedly taking her to a wooded area, where he was arrested.

Benzie prosecutor Anthony Cicchelli charged Jarvis with kidnapping and soliciting and contributing to the delinquency of a minor, but later had those counts dismissed because of the charges pending in Grand Traverse and Wexford counties.

Jarvis is still facing nine counts of criminal sexual conduct in Wexford County for alleged incidents with the girl between March and August 2004.

Prosecutor William Fagerman said he expects the charges against Jarvis in Wexford will be resolved in the next 30 days.

Any prison time from the Wexford charges would be concurrent to his Grand Traverse sentence, Fagerman said.

"Based on his (Grand Traverse) sentence, I am guessing we will probably work something out," he said. "In the next 30 days we will be coming up for trial, so we will try to make a plea deal before then."

NEWS: Local/Regional

Investigation continues in AmeriCorps worker case

BY JEREMY MCBAIN NEWS-REVIEW STAFF WRITER

Tuesday, August 23, 2005 2:35 PM EDT

Officials continue to investigate the dealings of a former AmeriCorps worker with children in an area school district.

The Charlevoix School District is investigating a trip former AmeriCorps volunteer Arthur Kirk took with about 80 eighth-grade students to Washington D.C.

"We are taking our time and making sure we are thorough. We are making sure nothing inappropriate happened during the time he (Kirk) was working as an AmeriCorps worker with our district," Charlevoix school superintendent John Sturock said.

Kirk was a worker with the AmeriCorps Program until recently when it was discovered he had an extensive criminal background - including a conviction for criminal sexual conduct with a minor.

A background check conducted by the Charlevoix-Emmet Intermediate School District when he was first hired for the position did not turn up anything, because Kirk had changed his name from Kirkeby. The criminal background was found when Kirk had applied for a concealed weapons permit.

Kirk was arrested on charges of possession of firearms by a felon and making false statements on a concealed weapons permit application and perjury other than court proceedings and habitual offender fourth degree notice. There have been no reports of any incidents with children.

However, because of his past, officials are looking into his recent work with area children.

Three years ago, Kirk went on a trip for a couple of days with about 80 eighth-grade students at Charlevoix Middle School to Washington, D.C., as a chaperone. Sturock said Kirk was not the only chaperone on the trip.

Sturock said the school is conducting an internal investigation of the trip, with the help of the Charlevoix County Sheriff's Office. He said the investigation started as soon as the district discovered his past.

In addition, Charlevoix sheriff George T. Lasater said he is collecting lists of all children Kirk has been in contact with during his time with the AmeriCorps program. This includes the school districts and private entities, such as Camp Daggett and Big Brothers, where Kirk volunteered.

He said so far only Camp Daggett has supplied him with a list, but he expects the others to do so soon as well.

"I thought it was appropriate since he (Kirk) covered two counties and a part of a third, to make contact with all those schools and entities," Lasater said.

Jeremy McBain can be contacted at 439-9316, or jmcbain@petoskeynews.com.

NEWS: Opinion

Petoskey News

Background checks a must

Tuesday, August 23, 2005 2:36 PM EDT

The Charlevoix-Emmet Intermediate School District and the Michigan State Police announced last week plans to improve the state's name-based background check system for school employees, and it's a good idea that's overdue.

The issue is timely locally. A Charleviox man with lengthy criminal background was recently fired from his job with the ISD. The record of Arthur Kirk, 70, did not come up on the state's system because he had changed his name.

And under the current system of investigating staff backgrounds, no one is to blame for missing his prior arrests. The check currently required of positions such as those held by Kirk - the ISD's AmeriCorps coordinator - only requires a criminal background check using a last name, not fingerprints or Social Security Number.

An investigation into Kirk began after he applied for a concealed weapons permit in late May and his fingerprints were submitted to the FBI and Michigan State Police. The check revealed prior arrests and convictions, including felonious assault and at least three prior sex offenses in Macomb and Oakland counties. The most recent conviction came in 1980, when Kirk served about five years in prison on a charge of first degree criminal sexual conduct; police said the victim was an 8-year-old boy. The prior convictions were under the name of Arthur Kirkeby, police said.

State law does require that all certified school employees, such as teachers and administrators, have a fingerprint-based background check.

In all of the school districts in Charlevoix and Emmet counties, all hired staff, including janitors and cafeteria workers, undergo a federal background check that includes fingerprints. Also, bus drivers must have fingerprint checks completed. These same background checks are not required for certain ISD staff, namely volunteers.

Kirk was not a volunteer (though he was when he initially joined the ISD in the AmeriCorps program), so fingerprint checks weren't required. At the time of his termination, he was paid via the ISD from the federal government, as AmeriCorps is a federal program. His position appears to be one of a few that isn't subject to any existing background check process.

Officials at the ISD want to make sure that doesn't happen again and have said they are now requiring fingerprinting of all employees.

And they'd like to see the state's system tweaked, though they aren't calling on the law to require fingerprint checks for all school volunteers; that doesn't seem feasible. Aside from the \$80 cost, which likely would be borne by the volunteer, the process can take six to eight weeks to complete - discouraging many a parent from stopping by to help out in the classroom.

Instead, the ISD is asking the state police to better use the system already in place - the Michigan State Police Criminal Background check system. This system currently uses name, date of birth, race, sex, driver's license number and Social Security Number. But the license and SSN are not primary identifiers, and are only triggered when the name is a duplicate; state police officials indicate that will be changed later this year.

With today's Internet technology, this system could even be used to check on volunteers. For instance, a classroom guest could check in to a school office, provide the information to the secretary who could enter it online and receive information.

We assume most volunteers would understand the importance of keeping kids safe. And there are so many valuable lessons for students to learn from the many volunteers who visit classrooms each year, from Junior Achievement to community leaders to grandmas and grandpas, schools need to keep their volunteers.

We're glad the ISD pushed the state police to tweak its system to ensure children's safety. It is of utmost importance.

Michigan Report

August 23, 2005

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTICE OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24

House Education, (Chr. Palmer, 373-2002), Rm. 307 HOB,
10:30 am

- Added to the agenda:

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SB 129 CHILD SEXUAL ASSAULT

RESTRICTION (Sanborn) Prohibits an individual convicted of child sexual assault from residing within 1 mile of a school or entering upon school property as condition of probation and provides minimum term of probation.

Published August 24, 2005

Missing \$630K hard to recover Attorney says Eaton guardian was not bonded

By Kelly Hassett
Lansing State Journal

CHARLOTTE - It won't be easy for relatives of two Lansing sisters to collect more than \$630,000 in missing money that their former Eaton County court guardian has been ordered to repay, their attorney says.

Philip Vilella, who represents the women's families, said a bank debt of nearly \$200,000 on what appears to be Charles M. Zwick's main asset - his Cochran Avenue office building - makes it an improbable source of money.

And Zwick wasn't bonded, meaning the families can't recoup their losses that way.

Vilella is working on ways to recover the money for the family of Wilma Southwell, who died at the age of 92, and Alice Grahn, who is 84 and has Alzheimer's disease.

"Any place we have to, we're just trying to sniff out," he said.

The families accuse the longtime Charlotte attorney - who's in Eaton County Jail on \$400,000 cash bond - of taking more than \$630,000 from the women's accounts and never explaining where the money went.

Zwick can't be reached for comment because Eaton County Jail does not take messages for inmates.

His attorney, John Deming, did not return a phone call Tuesday seeking comment.

If Zwick had been bonded, or insured, by the county, the sisters' estates would have been able to try to recover their money that way.

But the Southwell and Grahn cases came under an old state statute that did not require bonding.

While the ultimate decision on bonding is up to a judge, most cases have few or no assets, said Mike Kutas, circuit and probate courts administrator. The person's estate must pay the bond premium, which could drain its funds.

In the Southwell and Grahn cases, Zwick reported the sisters had much less than they actually did, which meant there wasn't a clear need to assign a bond, Kutas said.

"The real deception is the under-reporting of the assets," he said. Zwick - who's now the target of a criminal probe by Eaton County authorities and the FBI - was arrested in St. Joseph in southwest Michigan on Aug. 14 after being missing for nearly a month.

Contact Kelly Hassett at 267-1301 or khassett@lsj.com.

Timeline

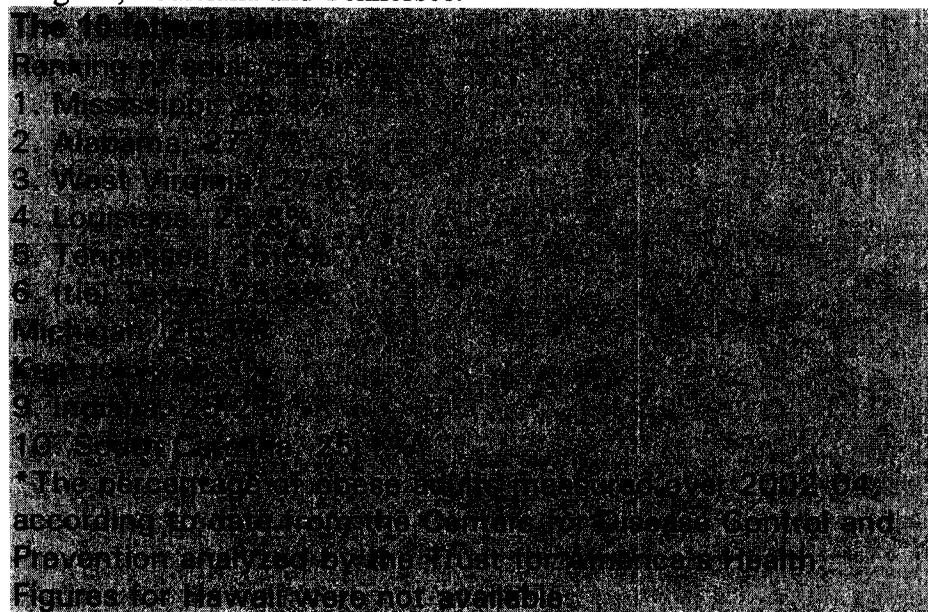
- June 9: Family of Wilma Southwell, via attorney Philip Vilella, files a request for Eaton County court guardian Charles M. Zwick to account for nearly \$350,000 in missing money from the deceased Lansing woman's estate.
- July 22: Zwick, 56, fails to appear for a probate court hearing in Judge Michael Skinner's courtroom on the Southwell allegation.
- Aug. 9: After giving Zwick time to respond or object to the Southwell claim, Skinner signs a judgment against the longtime Charlotte attorney for \$347,304.26.
- Aug. 10: Skinner signs an arrest warrant for Zwick on charges of failure to appear and breach of fiduciary duty.
- Aug. 14: Zwick is arrested in St. Joseph by local police, who pull him over after he makes an improper right turn.
- Aug. 19: The family of Alice Grahn - Southwell's sister - files another complaint alleging Zwick took about \$285,000 from Grahn's accounts. Skinner signs a judgment against Zwick the same day.

Most states get fatter, especially in the South

August 24, 2005

BY KEVIN FREKING
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON -- Like a lot of people, the nation's weight problem is settling below its waistline. The states with the highest percentages of obese adults are mostly in the South: Mississippi, Alabama, West Virginia, Louisiana and Tennessee.



But don't count out Midwestern heft: Michigan tied for sixth with two Southern states, Texas and Kentucky, with 25.3% adult obesity.

In the entire nation, only Oregon isn't getting fatter.

Some 22.7% of American adults were obese in the 2002-04 period, up slightly from 22% for 2001-03, says the advocacy group Trust for America's Health, citing data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Alabama had the biggest increase. There, the obesity rate increased 1.5 percentage points to 27.7%.

Eight states came in under 20%: Colorado, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont, Montana, Utah and New Hampshire. But their figures were all rising. Oregon held steady at 21%.

Figures for Hawaii were not available in the group's report Tuesday.

The federal government's goal is a 15% obesity rate for adults by 2010.

An adult with a body mass index of 30 or more is considered obese. The equation used to figure body mass index is body weight in kilograms

divided by height in meters squared.

The measurement is not a good indicator of obesity for muscular people who exercise a lot.

Why the geographic patterns? Some suggest that urban sprawl plays a role. Others say it's easier to find a burger and fries than apples and asparagus in poor communities.

Dr. Delia West, a professor of public health in Arkansas, said demographics play a part. The South has a larger percentage of minorities, who have shown an increased risk for obesity. She said Southerners also tend to lead a more sedentary lifestyle than their counterparts in states such as Colorado or Oregon.

Also, the Southern diet probably plays a role, said West, a professor at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.

"We know the difference between purple hulled peas and speckled butter beans," she said. "But we make them with bacon fat or salt pork."

To see the full report, go to: www.healthyamericans.org

Wednesday, August 24, 2005

Soldier loses custody fight, blames Iraq war

Deployment swayed decision on his son, says Lansing-area guardsman; wife and court disagree.

Associated Press

GRAND LEDGE -- Army National Guard Spc. Joe McNeilly claims that he lost shared custody of his 10-year-old son because he was serving in Iraq.

"You want to make a soldier cry, you take his son away," McNeilly, 33, of Grand Ledge, told the Lansing State Journal. "It's devastating."

The boy's mother, her lawyer and the Ingham County Friend of the Court disagree, saying McNeilly didn't lose custody because of his deployment. But McNeilly is getting some support in the custody dispute.

"He would still have his son if he hadn't been deployed," said Maj. Dawn Dancer, public affairs officer for the Michigan National Guard.

Don Reisig, director of the Ingham County Friend of the Court, said confidentiality laws bar him from saying much. He said the court's recommendation in May had nothing to do with McNeilly's military service.

But a report from a court hearing said the court favored Joey's mother, Holly Erb of Mason, because she was the "day to day caretaker and decision maker in the child's life" while McNeilly was deployed.

Erb's lawyer, Theresa Sheets of Lansing, said Erb wanted full custody because she no longer found McNeilly to be a fit father.

"This has absolutely nothing to do with his military service," Sheets said.

McNeilly had shared custody of Joey, his only child, before being deployed in 2004. But Erb had petitioned the court for full custody seven months after McNeilly joined the National Guard in 2003.

McNeilly agreed to give Erb temporary full custody until he returned from duty.

A custody order said the issue would be revisited when McNeilly returned from Iraq, but a court referee recommended against restoring custody.

\$1.8 million grant targets helping the homeless

Wednesday, August 24, 2005

By Ted Roelofs
The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- In and around the shelters and soup kitchens of Grand Rapids, these lost souls can be easy to spot: The bedraggled man talking to himself, the woman on South Division Avenue with the bottle and vacant stare.

For much of the past 25 years, that was the life of Mark Alten as he mixed alcohol and cocaine with bipolar disorder.

"I was on the streets. I'd stay at the missions at night. I slept under the bridges a few times. I attempted suicide a couple times," he said.

Finally, in 2003, Alten was hospitalized at Forest View Hospital, then discharged to a treatment program at the Guiding Light Mission in Grand Rapids. Free of drugs and alcohol since, he now is volunteer coordinator at the mission.

"It feels great," he said of his new life.

Thanks to a five-year, \$1.8 million federal grant announced today, local officials hope to duplicate Alten's success with a program aimed at the chronically homeless residents of the Heartside neighborhood.

It is targeted at homeless persons who have severe mental illness and substance abuse problems.

"We are very excited about this, the chance to attack this problem as a community," said Paul Ippel, executive director of network180, the Kent County-based mental health and substance abuse agency that will administer the grant.

It will fund four outreach workers from Touchstone innova, a local mental health agency.

They will be charged with making contact with these individuals, building a relationship, then persuading them to get mental health and substance abuse treatment. About 20 percent of the funds will pay for a researcher to analyze the program for results.

CONTINUED

\$1.8 million grant targets helping the homeless

Page 2 of 2

Ippel said persistent follow-up is "critical" to the chances of success with this group.

"That's why we tend not to be successful with these people in the past, because we haven't been able to follow up with them."

Greg Dziadosz, president of Touchstone, is optimistic the program will make a difference.

"This has a better chance of working than anything we've ever tried before," he said.

According to a 2001 U.S. Conference of Mayors report, 22 percent of the single adult homeless population suffers from some form of severe and persistent mental illness.

Other surveys have found that 38 percent of the frequently homeless report alcohol use problems and 26 percent other drug use problems.

The program's goal is to work with least 55 people a year and 45 at any one time.

One longtime advocate for the homeless mentally ill is "optimistic" the new program could succeed -- but only if it helps people find housing when they are stable.

"A lot of people on the street will tell you what you can do with your program" without a housing component, said The Rev. Don Tack, founder of the nonprofit Servant Center. Tack has aided the local homeless since 1991.

Because many in this group are slow to trust outsiders, Tack also said workers will need to exercise extraordinary patience if they are to succeed.

"It takes a long-term heavy time investment," Tack said.

Rescue Mission thanks supporters

Wednesday, August 24, 2005

DENISE FORD-MITCHELL
THE SAGINAW NEWS

For 100 years, the Saginaw City Rescue Mission has relied on the generosity of others to aid homeless individuals in the community.

However, leaders of the Christian organization based at 1021 Burt in Saginaw, graciously turned the table Tuesday by hosting the first of three free banquets to thank the countless volunteers, churches, social agencies and community leaders who have supported its empowerment efforts. More than 500 people filled the Horizons Conference Center, 6200 State, for the Rescue Mission's kick-off banquet fund-raiser. Additional free celebrations are slated for 6 p.m. Monday at the Doubletree Hotel, One Wenona Park in Bay City; and at 6 p.m. Tuesday at Valley Plaza, 5221 Bay City Road, Midland.

Organizers also paid tribute to retired physician, Dr. Clyde Davenport, presenting him with the title of honorary Life Board Member.

"I was pleasantly surprised at the turnout and the way people lingered afterwards indicating they enjoyed themselves," said Kenneth R. Streeter, director. "We understand, more in a centennial year than any other time, that we are enjoying the shade of trees planted a long time ago.

"It's a time to celebrate the mission of this unique faith-based organization that is so well supported by a great diversity of people. But we also wanted to remind people of the need the mission faces throughout the year."

The agency's mission is to glorify God by serving people in need, proclaiming the Gospel and establishing disciples among disadvantaged people, he said.

No information was available yet on the amount of money collected at the banquet, Streeter said. The funds will help provide shelter for 150 men, women and children.

For reservations and tickets for other scheduled banquets call the mission at 752-6051.

Denise Ford-Mitchell is a staff writer for The Saginaw News. You may reach her at 776-9668.

Art Review | **'Endurance'**

Posing, Speaking, Revealing

By HOLLAND COTTER
The New York Times

Published: August 24, 2005

NEWARK - "How does it feel," Bob Dylan wanted to know in the 1960's, "to be without a home, like a complete unknown, like a rolling stone?" His taunting question to a prideful high-flyer brought low became a moralizing anthem for an era. Recently two contemporary artists posed the question again, but to very different rolling stones of a new generation, in "Endurance," a potent multimedia art piece installed at Aljira, the contemporary art center here.

The artists are Bradley McCallum and Jacqueline Tarry, a Brooklyn-based youngish couple who have, in a fairly short time, established a solid track record in community-based art. In making "Endurance" they worked with an advocacy organization for homeless youths in Seattle called Peace for the Streets by Kids From the Streets. Through it, they hooked up with two dozen men and women, most white, in their teens or 20's, who became their collaborators.

Most of them were from broken or abusive homes. They lived as squatters in derelict buildings, crashed with strangers and friends, or moved around the city carrying with them whatever they owned. Some panhandled for a living; others sold drugs; a few had regular jobs. Several were active addicts or trying to break a habit. The common experience of homelessness bound them into a loose community, one that grew tight whenever a member died of an overdose or by violence.

The project, as Mr. McCallum and Ms. Tarry conceived it, was straightforward. They asked each of their collaborators to do three things: pose for a portrait photograph, record an autobiographical statement and perform alone in an hourlong video.

The format for all the videos was the same: each person stood for a full hour - occasionally changing positions or having a cigarette - on a Seattle street corner, facing a video camera positioned across the street. At the end of the hour, another person would take the place of the first, in a relay that continued for roughly 24 hours, from dawn one day in August 2002 to dawn of the next day.

Along with the demands on stamina and concentration, standing in place was, technically, an act of civil disobedience. Seattle has civility laws that make standing or sitting motionless for

extended periods a crime. But all the participants made it in the collective performance, which many approached as a vigil in memory of dead friends.

The portrait photographs are what grab your eye first at Aljira, because of their size and because of the exotic appearance of their subjects. A few are dressed in sweatshirts and jeans, but most go in for intensively customized punk-grunge-hip-hop ensembles, very "Look at me." By themselves, though, the pictures are of limited interest. They're basically just snapshots, and besides, looking outlandish isn't what it used to be. Suburban kids slumming in the city on a Saturday dress this way.

The video is what makes "Endurance" memorable, takes it beyond alternative-lifestyle anthropology. With simple fast-forwarding, Mr. McCallum and Ms. Tarry have shortened the 24-hour film to two hours, and the one-hour standing stints to five-minute segments. The segments are accompanied by the recorded autobiographies; the subjects tell how and why they got where they are, and how they feel about it.

They speak, often revealingly, about families, truncated childhoods and complicated love, about their plans to change their lives, and their equally determined plans not to change. And as they're talking, you see them on the screen, holding their places as life whizzes around them as day turns to dusk, dusk to night. At first they look awkward and unromantically vulnerable, then substantial and resilient, then admirable - valorous, even.

The most stirring moments come when one person's hour ends in the video and another's begins. The frenetic pace of the film slows as a new person enters with measured steps from the side and lines up face forward behind the person already there: a bulky man behind a slight woman, a short man behind a tall one. Each arrival gently lays a hand on the shoulder of the one already there, and at that moment, the film almost stops, as if holding its breath. Then the front performer, responding to the touch, turns and slowly walks out of the picture.

Only after you watch this passing of energy a few times do you start to figure out what you're really seeing: a ritual dance, a morality play and a mortality play. The story is primal. It's about being singular and at home in the world at the same time, and how difficult, but possible, that is. The homeless people in "Endurance" are living the story. The collaboration with Mr. McCallum and Ms. Tarry gives them a chance to perform it - that's the art part, the distancing and clarifying part - and lets us participate as witnesses.

A smaller version of "Endurance" appeared at Marvelli Gallery in Manhattan last season. But Aljira is a great place to experience it, both because the main street of a once prosperous, now struggling city is right there outside the door, and because there's another exhibition in Aljira's second gallery, a big, vigorous group show produced by the art center's Young Curators Program.

All the work in the show is by juniors and seniors from three Newark public high schools; and the curators who selected and installed it are students, too, working under the guidance of Aljira's program director, Eathon G. Hall Jr. The art is inventive, personal and aware of the world; the student-curators have arranged it adroitly by theme. And that's all I'll say, except to note that one of the themes is love; another is danger; another is home.

Food bank cause fires up chefs

Gleaners employs idea from television show to raise funds in Livingston County; competition nets \$4,000.

By Steve Pardo / The Detroit News

GENOA TOWNSHIP -- With declining food donations and falling state funds for charitable organizations, Gleaners Community Food Bank took an idea from television to help raise money.

The organization, which expects to give out one million pounds of food this year in Livingston County alone, held its own "Iron Chef" competition.

It pitted two well-known local culinary pros against each other in a fund-raising effort. And the event surpassed Gleaners officials' expectations, netting about \$4,000 for the food bank.

"This event drew in so many great responses," said Erica Karfonta, manager of operations for Gleaners. "I've gotten quite a few phone calls, e-mails and I have Post-It notes on my monitor of positive responses and what a great event it was."

The competition featured Rob Hindley, chef of TW & Friends in Genoa Township and Scott Swamba of Ciao Amici's in Brighton.

They knew each other from their days at the Ritz Carlton in Dearborn and still maintain a friendly relationship, Hindley said.

Hindley began working at TW & Friends when the restaurant opened in 2000. Swamba has led the staff at Ciao Amici's since 2001.

"When I run out of dried cherries I call him and when he runs out of capers he calls me. And vice versa," Hindley said.

And when Gleaners called the two chefs, both jumped at the opportunity to help. Friendship aside, they were all business when it came time to performing in front of the crowd.

The event was a takeoff of a television program that originated in Japan in 1993 and ran until 1999. Food Network still shows reruns of the Japanese show, dubbed in English.

At the same time, the network runs new Iron Chef America shows featuring noted chefs, including Bobby Flay and Wolfgang Puck.

About Gleaners

- Since 1977, Gleaners Community Food Bank has grown from distributing just one or two million pounds of food a year to nearly 24 million pounds annually, equivalent to 65,000 meals a day.
 - The nonprofit has distribution centers in Detroit, Warren, Taylor and Genoa Township.
- For information go to

Like the Food Network shows, the Gleaners challenge involved making the chefs use a secret ingredient. The local chefs admit to being stumped momentarily by the ingredient - coconut.

"Coconut threw me for a minute," Hindley said. "But it ended up coming together."

Hindley was declared the winner. The judging panel included Livingston County Undersheriff Mike Murphy and Livingston County Circuit Judge David Reader along with executive chef Jennifer Bakka

"It was friendly but we both wanted to win -- badly," Hindley said.

"He beat me fair and square," Swamba said. "Win lose or draw, it was a great experience. It brought attention to Gleaners and let people know what the food bank is all about feeding the needy."

Swamba admitted he forgot to use the secret ingredient in his second course -- a beef tenderloin on skewers. Murphy called him out on that during the judge's tasting.

Overall, the contest was so successful, Gleaners organizers are planning on making it an annual event. Next year, they plan to hold a silent auction with the highest bidders getting the honor of being the food judges.

Despite the growth and the relative wealth of Livingston County, the demand for food assistance continues to rise, Karfonta said.

Gleaners provides food to 28 nonprofit agencies, which, in turn, give the food to needy county residents. More families are being served and that is increasing the gap between the amount of food needed and what is available, she said.

The Shared Harvest Pantry, Gleaners' emergency food program, has seen a 35 percent increase this year.

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Meals on Wheels programs feeling the pain at the pump

By Rick Charmoli, Cadillac News

August 24, 2005

With no end in sight, programs like Meals on Wheels in Missaukee, Osceola and Wexford counties are starting to feel the pain at the pump.

Nutrition director Vi Brott, Meals on Wheels/Northwest Michigan Human Services, said the higher prices for fuel have definitely had an impact on what the program can offer.

Because of the higher cost of fuel, Brott said Meals on Wheels is going to be changing some routes from five days a week hot meals to just a couple days a week starting in October. The route that will be affected is a paid driver route that covers an eastern portion of Missaukee County. Likewise, Brott said the route that handles the Mesick area will be changing from hot meal delivery to frozen meal delivery beginning in October as well.

The Meals on Wheels program that covers Missaukee and Wexford counties also covers Grand Traverse, Leelanau and Manistee counties, Brott said.

"We have an idea for a fund-raiser to help out. I think we will call it 'Gallon a Month Club.' We will try to get people to donate what they think will be the cost of gas for as many months as they want," she said. "Just to see if it will help us out a little bit. We don't have it fleshed out yet, we just have the idea."

Meals on Wheels volunteer coordinator for the five counties, Wanda Hamel, said so far it has not affected the number of volunteers in Missaukee and Wexford counties but it could in the future.

Currently, Hamel said only one-third of the volunteer drivers ask to be reimbursed for gas money but that too could change.

"I'm afraid it will impact the volunteers that want to do it. They can get reimbursement but it is probably not enough," she said. "We just don't know."

In Osceola County, Commission on Aging director Loraine McCall said they are looking at ways to raise extra funds as well as possible changes that could take effect as early as Oct. 1.

She also said she hopes the rise in fuel costs will not affect the number of volunteers.

McCall said the Osceola County COA uses the IRS Allowable Rate for mileage reimbursement. Currently it is at 40 1/2 cents and right now they are anticipating it to increase by Jan. 1.

"As far as mileage, we pay volunteers what the IRS pays for mileage so if the IRS Allowable Rate goes up, ours will go up," she said. "We do have two vans that we own so we don't have to reimburse for those just pay for the gas but those prices have increased too and we anticipate them to rise more."

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Grand Rapids police, schools team up to fight truancy

Wednesday, August 24, 2005

By Dave Murra
The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- More than 630 Grand Rapids elementary students missed 30 days or more of class last year, prompting Kent County prosecutors and city police to team up with the schools and crack down on truancy.

Prosecutor Bill Forsyth and Police Chief Harry Dolan have approached Superintendent Bert Bleke to find a way for their three offices to combat the problem, with details to be unveiled at a Sept. 6 Board of Education meeting.

Forsyth on Tuesday referred questions to Bleke. Dolan confirmed there have been discussions among the three, but said he is not ready to discuss details.

Administrators told school board members that 633 students of the 10,300 students in kindergarten through fifth grade have missed more than 30 days, with some gone for more than 70 days of the 180-day school year.

Teresa Neal, the district's assistant to the superintendent for community and student affairs, said staffers this week started contacting families to understand why students were not in class.

"It could be neglect, but it could also be a health issue," she said. "If it's a health issue, we want to know about that because there are things we can do to make sure the parents are getting all the support they need."

Under the district's policy, principals will send a letter to parents after four absences if there are concerns, with a copy sent to the district's family support specialist.

If there is no improvement, the district's security staff would be assigned to make a home visit and discuss the need for attendance and reasons for truancy, offer support services and lay out steps that will follow should the student continue to miss school.

If the student is still absent, the district plans to ask for help from the police department, which would send a community officer to make a home visit.

CONTINUED

Grand Rapids police, schools team up to fight truancy

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After 20 unexcused absences, the complaint would be forwarded to the Kent County prosecutor for possible criminal charges against the parents.

"It is not our intent to lock parents up," Neal said. "Our goal is to educate children. By the time we go to the police, there will be many, many home visits."

High school students -- who can legally stop attending at age 16 -- fall under a different policy modified by the board this month. Students cannot miss more than 10 classes without making up the time after school or in Saturday sessions, although absences would not force a teacher to give a student failing grades.

Board President Amy McGlynn likes the idea of first reaching out through social-service agencies.

"We're reaching out a helping hand, not a fist," she said. "The absences are symptoms of bigger problems, and sometimes there are problems we can help with. Do the kids have clothes? Is the mother being abused? Is everyone fed? Our approach is 'What can we do to help you?'"

But she said in extreme cases in might take police intervention to get the children to school.

Countywide, such cases are reported to Ross Cate, a truancy officer based in the Kent Intermediate School District.

Districts reported 745 cases -- 119 from Grand Rapids -- to Cate during the 2004-05 school year. That's up from 730 the year before and 706 in 2002-2003. There were 150 reports for high school students, 370 for middle-schoolers and 225 for elementary school children.

KISD Assistant Superintendent Ron Koehler said it has been difficult to prosecute in the past because parents claim to be home-schooling their children, a legal option.

"Once we identify the parents, we do all we can to work with them through the community agencies and try to get at whatever problem is causing the children to miss so much school," he said. "When we've gone to court, it usually becomes a stalemate and the loser is the kids."

Koehler said three cases were referred to prosecutors last year -- parents of two middle-schoolers and one elementary student -- following requests from Child Protective Services, which believed abuse and neglect were involved.

Wednesday, August 24, 2005

More job losses expected in Michigan

Forecast is bad news for governor, who hoped to campaign on brighter economic note.

By Mark Hornbeck / Detroit News Lansing Bureau

LANSING -- Gov. Jennifer Granholm's own economic gurus now say the state's unemployment rate will rise again next year -- distressing news as the first-term governor gears up for her re-election campaign.

Michigan's jobless rate, which at 7 percent tops the nation, is expected to climb to 7.4 percent next year, according to economists for the state Treasury and the House and Senate fiscal agencies. Hopes that the state economy would turn around in time for the 2006 election year have all but faded away.

Republicans already are tagging Granholm "the unemployment governor," a label that may stick heading into 2006.

"That certainly doesn't help the governor," said Bill Rustem, president of Public Sector Consultants, an independent public policy think tank based in Lansing. "Whether it's true or false, the governor always gets blame for the performance of the state economy. That's just the way it is."

Granholm's campaign staff and others say the sluggish auto industry is chiefly to blame for Michigan's economic doldrums.

"Clearly, there are a number of different issues that come into the unemployment rate here in Michigan," said Chris DeWitt, spokesman for Granholm's re-election bid. "There is collective responsibility for the governor and also for the Legislature. But there are a huge number of factors clearly outside the control of the governor, the main one being, how are cars made in Michigan selling."

But Republicans, led by likely Granholm opponent Dick DeVos, continue to point out that nearly every state in the nation has rebounded from last year's economic slowdown. Michigan is the exception. DeVos, a former executive at Alticor (formerly Amway Corp.) in broadcast interviews this week sounded out what promises to be the centerpiece of his '06 campaign.

"We have a business problem in Michigan. I'm suggesting that for the next CEO of Michigan, the people might want to hire a business person to solve the problem," he said.

Lansing pollster Ed Sarpolus said DeVos' attacks will work if Granholm isn't seen as actively working to solve the problem.

"If she doesn't get her hands dirty now, and if voters don't see this as mainly an auto industry problem, this may very well fall at the governor's doorstep," Sarpolus said.

Democratic Party Chair Mark Brewer says the Legislature will have to share the blame, particularly if they don't adopt Granholm's plans for reforming the state business tax.

"We're planning on it being a close race for governor," Brewer added. "We have a very wealthy Republican candidate who hasn't been shy about spending his money on right-wing causes."

Bill Ballenger, editor of the Inside Michigan Politics newsletter, points out that the state's economic forecasters have been consistently wrong in recent years. Granholm can only hope they're wrong again.

"They may be erring this time on the side of an inflated unemployment number so at least they prepare the electorate for bad news next year," he said.

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Detroit News

August 24, 2005

Last day to get free school supplies

Today is the last day that Livingston County residents can pick up free school supplies from the Livingston Educational Service Agency. The agency is distributing the free school supplies as part of its School Supplies for a Successful Start program, which runs from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at its offices on 1425 W. Grand River. The program provides free school supplies to Livingston County students in financial need. For information about the program, call (517) 546-5550.

Editorial

The New York Times

Welfare Reform Redux

Published: August 24, 2005

For three years, Congress has been staring ostensible success in the face - the 1996 reform of the old welfare system - and dithering about what to do next. The tough-edged "workfare" plan, which cut welfare cases in half, has expired but has been temporarily extended 10 times as lawmakers have clashed over what kind of balance to strike between toughness and humaneness. A showdown moment for two million marginal families is approaching, with hard-line Republicans in the House insisting on a measly \$1 billion increase over five years for child care support.

Fortunately, the Senate has a better plan. Olympia Snowe, the Maine Republican who is a champion of child care, is fervidly defending a proposal for \$6 billion more in child care money. That is the minimum, she wisely argues, to realize the goal of guiding people on welfare into the workplace.

Child care has been one of the reform's most critical elements because it frees poor parents to meet work requirements. But the House proposal would not even cover inflation costs in the next five years.

Hard-liners, posing as budget hawks in advance of the next elections, are making live-within-our-means pronouncements - as if they haven't been reckless enablers for the Bush administration's record budget deficits and tax cuts for the affluent.

We urge Senator Snowe and another key supporter, Senator Charles Grassley, the Iowa Republican and Finance Committee chairman, to stand fast in the coming welfare fight.

Port Huron Times Herald

Letters to the editor

Cash-strapped Michigan ought to put end to public assistance

If the state wants to save money, it should cut the welfare program out completely. Working in retail, I have seen so many cases of abuse it's absurd.

I have seen people on the Bridge Card pull up in nicer vehicles than I drive and waste their food stamps on junk. I have seen them pull out money from the Bridge Card and turn around and purchase lottery tickets, beer and cigarettes.

This program may do some go for 10% of the people who actually need it, but for the other 90%, it's wasted money. There is no reason an able bodied person cannot get one job or two jobs to make ends meet.

At what point does this help anyone? And when will this end? This system needs to be completely reworked so the hard-working individual paying taxes isn't burdened with the lazy career welfare recipients in Port Huron and the rest of Michigan.

THOMAS STOUTENBERG

Port Huron, Aug. 18

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